



Statement from Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation Chief and Council on Coutts border crossing blockade

Fort Chipewyan, AB, February 2, 2022 – Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation Chief and Council are issuing the following statement in regard to the border blockade at Coutts, Alberta:

"Over the past several days we have watched in dismay as the border blockade at Coutts, Alberta, is allowed to continue without intervention from authorities. The Critical Infrastructure Defense Act, passed in 2020, was created in response to Indigenous railway blockades protesting pipeline developments on Indigenous territories. This law was used to end Indigenous blockades – so the question that must be asked is why the blockade at Coutts is allowed to continue? *? - none of it race.*

If this blockade was being organized by Indigenous people, we have no doubt that authorities would respond quickly to remove the blockade and utilize the law that has been created to do so. Yet in Coutts we see the inequities in our country when it comes to Indigenous people and the methods used to control our rights to peaceful protest. If the blockade in Coutts consisted of Indigenous people there would have been arrests and charges laid; instead, the Coutts blockade is being allowed to continue, even though it has at times become violent. We do not condone or encourage violence in any manner.

It is important to recognize the disparity between how Indigenous and non-Indigenous protests are approached by our government. It is shocking to see this blatant disparity as we watch the complete government inaction to address the blockade at Coutts. If peaceful protests of critical infrastructure at Coutts is allowed, then we expect the same to be true in the future should Indigenous people engage in similar forms of protest."

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Alberta RCMP have never used

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[Signature]

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